



# SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST / GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

## FALL GUIDE 2005

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## Changes in the works

### NEW SHERMAN TREE TRAIL

An important restoration project is underway! Parking and trails are being relocated around this giant sequoia and trailside exhibits are being created. Work such as this has its awkward stages, and we are in the middle of one of them. Here is what you need to know:

**Finding the new parking area:** A mile or so north of the Sherman Tree (between the tree and Lodgepole), turn east off the Generals Highway onto Wolverton Road. From there, signs direct you to turn right onto the road to the parking area.

**The new trail:** It is paved, with a few stairsteps along the way. From the parking lot to the base of the Sherman Tree, this trail drops 212 feet in elevation in less than 1/2 mile. At this elevation (~7000 feet), this will feel fairly steep as there is probably less oxygen than you are used to.

Don't go further down the trail than you can climb back up. Take your time and use the benches along the way to catch your breath. Those who really cannot make it back up may walk downhill from the Sherman Tree to the Generals Highway and have someone pick them up. But be careful: There is neither a trail nor a parking area along the highway for this.

Why did we put the new parking area uphill from the Sherman Tree? It is as close as it could be without damaging more sequoias, and its location had already been disturbed by earlier roads.

If this is too steep, try the easy, paved Big Trees Trail. It offers wonderful closeups of huge sequoias plus wayside exhibits and accessible parking (see page 6 for details).

**No wheelchair access — yet:** An accessible trail and parking is now



Along the new trail, this viewpoint of the Sherman Tree includes an outline of the tree's "footprint" in granite blocks.

under construction near the old parking area. We could not build it at the same time as the new parking area without closing *all* access to the tree for almost a year. We hope to have the accessible trail and parking open by next summer.

**Why this change?** This is one of the last major steps in a huge project to protect the world's largest trees. Pavement, pipes, road cuts, a sewage treatment plant, and commercial buildings have been removed from the grove to help ensure that the Giant Forest remains the best habitat anywhere for Big Trees. In addition, the old parking area, far too small for modern traffic, often gridlocked in summer. Yet it could not be enlarged due to surrounding sequoias. The new location let us make it larger.

Construction or early snowfall may disrupt access occasionally. Thank you for your patience!

### ENTRANCE FEE INCREASE NEXT YEAR

On January 1st, the fee increases to \$20 per car for one week of visiting Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and portions of Sequoia National Forest. The good news: Most of it stays here to improve your visit! See page 4 for more on how these funds are being put to work.

### NEW EXHIBITS FOR GRANT GROVE

Say a fond goodbye to the 40-year-old photos and text in the Grant Grove Visitor Center. By next summer, new exhibits should be taking their place! Paid for by entrance fees and donations, the exhibits and a new film will focus on the fantastic features protected in Kings Canyon National Park.

Starting in November, the old exhibit area and the slide program will be closed as we renovated these rooms to receive the new exhibits. The information desk will remain open. Stop by and ask for an update!